

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS AND PRIVATE LIFE

Homeless—In the new home—Hunting adventures—Kruger kills his first lion—The dead lion roars—Further lion-hunts—Panther and rhinoceros hunting—Under a rhinoceros—Buffalo hunting—A fight with a buffalo-cow—Elephant hunting—Race between Kruger and an elephant—Canine fidelity—Kruger amputates his own thumb.

MY recollections go back to the time when, as a boy of nine, I left the land of my birth with my parents and my uncles Gert and Theunis Kruger.

Till then we had lived at Vaalbank Farm, in the Colesberg district in Cape Colony, where I was born on the 10th of October 1825 as the third child of Caspar Jan Hendrik Kruger¹ and Elisa Steyn, his wife, daughter of Douw Steyn, of Bulhoek Farm, behind the Zuurberg in Cape Colony. My parents were simple farmers, and I grew up at the farm like other farmers' lads, looking after the herds and lending a hand in the fields. With the exception that an old woman prophesied to my mother that her son

¹ The President declares that his ancestors originally came from Germany, but his family do not know from which town. He only knows that the founder of the African branch of the family married a French-woman, and was obliged to fly from the country on account of his religion.
—*Note by the Editor of the German Edition.*

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Stephanus Johannes Paulus was destined for a superior position in life, I do not know that any one could have had the least notion that God would entrust me with a special mission.

The first event of importance in my life was our departure from home, our *trek*. I was too young at the time to occupy myself much with the reason of the great emigration. But I know that my parents said they emigrated because the English first sold the slaves and, after they had got the money, set these slaves free again; and that the money which had been awarded in compensation was made payable in England, where it could be received either personally or through an agent. The expenses entailed by this method of payment in many cases amounted to more than the capital, so that a great many preferred to sacrifice what was due to them, rather than be put to so much trouble and vexation. But they refused to continue to live under such unjust masters. Added to this, the Kaffirs repeatedly raided the colony and stole the Boers' cattle, and the English general, after the Boers had themselves recovered their cattle, declared the collective herds to be so much booty, out of which the British Government must recover their war-costs before the rest could be distributed among the former proprietors, who had themselves joined in the fighting in order to get back their own. The discontent caused by this unjust proceed-

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ing took a firm hold of the Boer mind; especially since each child when quite young receives as his personal property a couple of sheep, oxen or horses from his parents, which he tends with special care and to which his heart becomes attached. Among the stolen beasts were naturally those belonging to the children, and when those presents, made sacred by custom, were detained in such an arbitrary way and used for the purposes of a war-indemnity, much bitterness was caused. And so my parents and relatives left house and home for a wild and unknown country, and set out, about twenty of them, with nearly thirty thousand African sheep and a few hundred horses and cattle, which they had received largely in exchange for the goods they left behind.

The exodus over the Orange River commenced in May 1835. Here my father sold about three thousand wethers, at a *dikketon*¹ (an old coin, worth a little over two shillings) apiece to a butcher, after which the expedition proceeded towards the neighborhood of the Caledon River, and there encamped. My occupation here, as well as on our further marches, was to drive the cattle and keep them together. The children of most of the emigrants had to do this work, for the black servants had nearly all remained in the Colony, and, just at that time, when

¹ Obviously a corruption of "ducaton," the old silver ducat of Venice.—*Translator's Note.*

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the whole property of the families consisted of herds of cattle, their services would have proved specially useful.¹

Other burghers left their home at the same time as my parents and were also encamped near the Caledon River. But this was not the Great Trek. That took place during the following year, 1836, under Hendrik Potgieter, and was joined by the single groups of earlier emigrants. Immediately after this junction, a meeting was held, resolutions were passed to which all the emigrants had to submit, and a sort of government was instituted. But God's Word constituted the highest law and rule of conduct. Potgieter was chosen for the first position, that of commandant. The resolutions which came into general force contained, for example, the decree that it was unlawful to take away from the natives, by force, land or any other of their property, and that no sla-

¹ I am on this occasion able to confirm the authenticity of an anecdote which tells how a gentleman who introduced an English lord to President Kruger, thinking that the latter did not take sufficient account of his aristocratic visitor, and hoping to make a greater impression upon him, began to enumerate the important positions which this nobleman occupied, and to tell what his ancestors had been. Whereupon the President answered drily :

“Tell the gentleman that I was a cow-herd and my father a farmer.”

The gentleman who introduced this nobleman was the proprietor of a large distillery at Zwartkop in the neighborhood of Pretoria.—*Note by the Editor of the German Edition.*

The anecdote is quite well known in England, where I have often heard it told of a certain noble duke who, at that time, had held no particular position outside the Court, but whose father, who was then living, had filled more than one important post under Government.—*Translator's Note.*

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very would be permitted. They now proceeded jointly to the Vet River and crossed the whole of the Free State without depriving the weak native races which lived there of a single thing. The land between the Vet and the Vaal Rivers was bartered in exchange for oxen and cows by the Kaffir chief who ruled there.

When the first emigrants arrived at the Vaal, and were encamped both here and on the Rhenoster River in small scattered parties, they were attacked unexpectedly and without having given the least provocation by the Zulu chief Moselikatse. This Moselikatse was at that time lord and master of the entire country west of the Lebombo and Drakensberg Mountains. All the Makatse tribes in this district had submitted to his sway. He treated them like dogs and called them so, and, when vultures passed over his "town," he gave orders to kill a few poor old men and women and throw them for food to his "children," as he called the vultures. The subjugated races hid from him in caves and gorges. When Moselikatse heard that men with white faces had come from the south, he sent a couple of thousand warriors with orders to massacre the invaders. The trekkers who were encamped along the Rhenoster and Vaal Rivers were divided into small parties, which was necessary on account of the dimensions of the herds, so as not to cause quarrels about the graz-

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ing lands. They were surprised by Moselikatse's robber band, and the greater number of them murdered.

After this massacre the Matabele went back to their town, taking the cattle with them; but they returned a fortnight later in great numbers and attacked the emigrants at Vechtkop, in the Orange Free State. But here Sarel Celliers had built a strong laager and, with the 33 men whom he had at his disposal, repelled the impetuous attacks of the Zulus, from his wagon fortress, causing them heavy losses. Women and children bravely assisted the defenders of the camp, casting bullets, loading the rifles and, in some instances, even taking rifle in hand themselves to shoot down the enemy. On their retreat to the Moselikatse Pass, near Pretoria, and to Marico, two of their principal places, the Kaffirs carried off all the emigrants' cattle, as naturally they could not be taken into the laager, and so were unprotected. They also took with them two white children and three half-breeds, of whom nothing was ever heard again.

A small party of burghers, under Potgieter, pursued the enemy as far as the Marico River: God was with them and gave them the victory at Zeerust. They continued to pursue the enemy further, and in the end entered into possession of his territory.

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They recovered part of their property and, when Moselikatse had fled, the commando returned.

A small number of the emigrants now proceeded to Natal. To develop the conquered country and make it independent, it was necessary to be in communication with the outer world, and, in Natal, where already a number of emigrants had settled and were in treaty for the necessary acquisition of land, they hoped to obtain the harbor of Durban. But after the treacherous murder of Piet Retief and the attack on the settlers by Dingaan's hordes, most of the emigrants, including my father, returned to the district which is contained within the Free State and Transvaal of to-day. My people settled at Liebenberg Vlei, in what has since become the Orange Free State; a tract of country which became so well known through Kitchener's operations against De Wet.

A commando again crossed the Vaal, in 1839, to find and punish Moselikatse, who continued to rob and plunder, and also to recover the stolen cattle. I took part in this expedition. Potgieter left the wagon laager behind at Wonderfontein, in what is now the Potchefstroom district, and, with a mounted commando, pursued Moselikatse, who continued to fall back. The whole country had been devastated and all the settlers murdered. Potgieter discovered

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the Chief Magato at Klein Bueffelshoek, near the well-known Elephant River in the Magaliesberg, where he was hiding. We shall hear of him again, for he settled, later, in the neighborhood of Rustenburg. He had only a few followers with him and, when Potgieter asked him where Moselikatse was, he told him that he had already crossed the Crocodile River. Asked why he had remained behind and was in hiding, he said that he had escaped during the night on the march to the north, and was now hiding because he stood in fear of Moselikatse's bands which had been left behind on the Moselikatse Pass. Seeing that it was impossible to overtake Moselikatse and that an attack on the entrenched position at Moselikatse Pass was out of the question, the commando returned to the women's camp on the Rhenoster and Vaal Rivers. But as early as the following year, 1840, Potgieter started with another commando, and this time went direct to Moselikatse Pass. I took part in this expedition too. Potgieter there found a large Kaffir town, which he stormed. When it was in our hands we recovered a number of things which had formerly belonged to the trekkers who had been murdered by Moselikatse's orders.

During the pursuit of Moselikatse, the chief Magali told Potgieter that there was still a force of Moselikatse's savages at Strijdpoot in the Waterberg district. Potgieter went there at once and at-

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tacked the Kaffir camp. But it turned out that we were fighting the wrong people. They were not Zulus but Rooi, or red Kaffirs who had been forced to join Moselikatse's hordes. Directly Potgieter was informed of this fact he put a stop to the fighting. Mamagali, who had been the cause of this battle, was arrested and, after a regular trial by court martial, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. He would not have got off so cheaply had he not been able to prove that the Rooi Kaffirs had always been associated with Moselikatse on the war-path, and that he had taken them for Zulus.

At last the wanderers had found a comparatively safe home. It is obvious that the disturbed life which they had led till then must have occasioned great losses. To institute schools or churches, or a firm and regular management of external affairs, was out of the question. But the Boer fathers and mothers, for all that, looked after the education of their children to the very best of their ability. They knew that they lived in a country where anything that was once neglected was difficult to recover, and that to neglect the rising generation meant the ruin of their nationality. Therefore every Boer taught his children to read and write, and, above all, instructed them in God's Word. At dinner and supper, as the children sat round the table, they had to read part of the Sacred Scriptures, and to repeat from memory or write

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down now this and now that text; and this was done day by day unless unusual circumstances made it impossible. That is how my father taught me the Bible, and instructed me in its teaching during the evenings. My other course of instruction was covered altogether by a period of about three months, with frequent interruptions. My master's name was Tielman Roos, who found much difficulty in carrying out his mission. Whenever the trek came to a resting-place and we out-spanned, a small hut was built of grass and reeds, and this became the school-room for the trekkers' children. This was done during the whole journey to the Magaliesberg, where my father settled.

When I was sixteen years old I was entitled to choose two farms like any other independent member of our community; one as a grazing-place and the other for sowing with crops. I lived at Waterkloof, and, in 1842, fetched Miss Maria du Plessis, from the country south of the Vaal, to be my wife.¹

¹ During a journey which he had undertaken in order to visit his betrothed, young Kruger found that the torrential waters of the Vaal were so swollen as to render it impassable. But his ardor was greater than the danger, and his strength mightier than the force of the stream. He drove his horses into the water, and, dressed as he was, swam with them across the river under conditions which threatened almost certain death. The old ferryman, who had not dared to cross the river that day with his boat, read him a fine lecture. But it was thrown away. Fortunately the engagement did not last long enough to render a repetition of this hazardous enterprise necessary.—*Note by the Editor of the German Edition.*

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The wedding took place in the village of Potchefstroom, which began to flourish at that time.¹

After a period of rest, a new expedition was fitted out, in 1845, in order to colonize the conquered country. Every participant received the promise of another farm in that part of the country. A commission, to which my father belonged, had gone to Delagoa Bay during the previous year in order to come to an understanding with Portugal regarding the mutual frontier, and had agreed that the ridge of the Lebombo Mountains should form the frontier between Portugal and that part of the country which the Boer emigrants wished to colonize. I accompanied this expedition, as deputy field cornet, with my father and the other members of our family. We went as far north as the present Lydenburg district, and there founded the village of Ohrigstad. But we found no abiding-place there. Fever, cattle-sickness and other evils determined us to return to the Magaliesberg, where I continued to live and acquired several farms by barter. Here, in January 1846, I had the misfortune to lose my wife and the little baby

¹ There was at that time as little opportunity for church weddings as for school instruction or proper preparation for confirmation. The Boer was obliged to be, more or less, his own schoolmaster, minister and civil servant. Even as in the late war, a landdrost had often to appoint himself, so as to provide for an official qualified to "legalize" marriages. Perhaps that accounts for the fact that the otherwise so religious Boers looked upon civil marriage as a perfectly natural rite for many years before we began to fight for it as a "necessity of our enlightened times."
—*Note by the Editor of the German Edition.*

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to whom she had given birth. God gave me another life-companion in Miss Gezina Suzanna Frederika Wilhelmina du Plessis. From this marriage sprang nine sons and seven daughters, of whom three sons and five daughters are still alive.

The first care of the new settlers was to secure reliable labor and to induce the black inhabitants of the country to undertake it. That was not an easy matter. For, although the Kaffir was willing enough to work, he was always endeavoring to cheat his master in one way or another. And, as soon as he had learned his work, his arrogance often became unbearable. We had constantly to fight this difficulty in great ways and small, and the contest sometimes had its humorous side. For instance, one New Year's Day, I sent a Kaffir from my farm at Waterkloof to my mother's farm (I had lost my father in 1852) to fetch some raisins. My mother sent me about five or six pounds, and said so in a note, which the Kaffir conscientiously delivered. But the letter was a proof that the Kaffir had robbed me, for the raisins which he brought weighed much less than the quantity mentioned in the letter. I asked him what he meant by trying to cheat me and why he had eaten nearly all the raisins.

"The letter tells me," I said, "that there were a great many more than you brought me."

"Baas," he replied, "the letter lies, for how could

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it have seen me eat the raisins? Why, I put it behind the big rock under a stone and then sat down on the other side of the rock to eat the raisins.”

After I had convinced him that the letter knew all about it nevertheless, he humbly acknowledged his fault; still the thing was not quite clear to him.

I had a very faithful Kaffir, called April, on one of my other farms at Boekenhoutfontein in the Rustenburg district. During the winter I traveled with my cattle to Saulspoor, near Pilaansberg. Before going away I called him aside and said:

“ I will teach you how to read a letter.”

I then took a piece of paper and drew lines on it.

“ The longest lines,” I continued, “ stand for melons, the next oranges and the shortest lemons,” and I added that he was to send me from time to time just as many of each of these as were indicated by the number of strokes in the letter which I should send by a messenger. He was also to send back a letter by the messenger and inform me, by means of similar lines, how many he had sent of each sort, and to close the letter carefully. The Kaffir was immensely proud of his scholarly attainments, and from that moment considered himself immeasurably above every other Kaffir. There was really no need to tell him not to give my secret away; nothing would have induced him to do so. Later on, I sent two messengers to him and said simply:

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“ Give this letter to April; he will give you what I want.”

This was done; and when they returned, bringing a letter from April, I said:

“ Give me the letter which April has written, so that I may see if you have cheated me or not.”

They were simply amazed, and April's scholarship roused their unbounded envy and admiration. They told everybody about the wise April who had suddenly learned to read and write.

At that time there were no missionaries in our country; but a pious Kaffir, called David, went round among his countrymen in order to teach them religion. When this David wanted to teach the Kaffirs in my district the Bible and how to read it, they refused to learn to read or write.

“ Why,” they asked, “ should we first learn the ‘ book ’ and then bother to learn to write, in order to be able to read again what we have already learned, when Paul Kruger's Kaffir reads and writes without knowing the book and without having learned to write? ”

David came to me and told me his difficulties, and, in order to break down the resistance of the Kaffirs, I was obliged to let David into my secret. April did not forgive me for a long time, for his importance and the admiration of his comrades were now things of the past.

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During the first years of our settlement as well as during our wanderings it was our task to clear the recently acquired land of wild animals, which had hitherto roamed about unrestrained side by side with the wild races, and thus to protect our pastures. Every Boer took an active part in this work, and the rising youth, in whom the love of adventure had turned hunting into a passion, did a great deal, in this way, to make the country habitable.

It is, of course, impossible that I should be able to tell to-day how many wild beasts I have killed. It is too much to remember the exact number of lions, buffaloes, rhinoceroses, giraffes and other big game; and, besides, it is nearly fifty years since I was present at a big hunt. Nor can I recall to mind all the details connected with those hunts. As far as I know, I must have shot at least thirty to forty elephants and five hippopotamuses. And I know that I have killed five lions by myself. When I went hunting I always took a companion with me, as well as good horses; and I made it a rule, on larger hunting expeditions, to allow two or three wagons of our poor people to accompany us, so that they might have the game.

I shot my first lion in the year 1839. I was then 14 years of age. A lion had attacked our herds and robbed us of several head of cattle that were graz-

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ing by the banks of the Rhenoster River in what has since become the Orange Free State. Six of us started (I was the seventh, but did not count) to find that lion. We were all mounted and rode in two parties of three, with a good distance between the parties. The lion sighted us before we were face to face with him, and came on with a wild rush. The three adults with whom I had come, my father, my uncle and my brother, quickly tied the horses together and then turned them round, with their heads in the opposite direction to that from which the lion was bearing down upon us. This is the regular procedure at a lion hunt; for, if the horses catch sight of a lion, there is always a danger lest they should get frightened and bolt.

My relatives placed us. I was told to sit behind—or, from the lion's point of view, in front of—the horses, with my rifle covering him. His last bound brought him close to me; then he crouched, with the intention, as it seemed to me, of jumping right over me on the horses. As he rose, I fired, and was fortunate enough to kill him outright, so that he nearly fell on top of me. My companions ran to my assistance; but I needed no help, for the lion was dead. He was a strong beast.

Hearing the shot, the other three hurried up, and then we all stood round the lion and talked the adventure over. A certain Hugo knelt down to mea-

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sure the lion's teeth, which were extraordinarily big. Thinking no harm, I jumped on the lion's stomach. As I did so, the air shook with a tremendous roar, which so frightened Hugo that he forgot his tooth-measurements and fell down flat upon his back. The others shook with laughter, for every hunter knows that, if you tread upon a lion's body within a short time of his death, he will give a short last roar as though he were still alive. The breath still in him, being forced from the stomach through the throat, produces the roar. Hugo, of course, knew this, but he had forgotten it, and was greatly ashamed of his fright. In fact, he was so angry that he turned on me to give me a good hiding. But the others stepped good-naturedly between us and made him see that it was only my ignorance that had given him so great a fright.

I shot my second lion behind the Magaliesberg on the Hex River. My uncle Theunis Kruger and I were after a herd of antelopes when, my horse being done up, I was left behind, alone. Riding at a foot-pace, I came upon a herd of lions. Escape on a tired horse was out of the question. Suddenly one of the lions left the herd and made a dash for me. I allowed him to come within twenty paces and then shot him through the head. The bullet passed through the head into the body. The lion fell, with his head turned away from me, but jumped up

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again immediately and returned to his companions, while I reloaded. The moment he reached the herd, he fell down dead. Encouraged by my success, I fired upon the others. But in vain. They escaped into the nearest mountain, and I was not able to follow them. A few years later, I had another encounter, on the same spot, with a herd of lions which had killed several of our oxen. These also escaped into the same mountain; but I succeeded in first shooting two of them. My companions, who were not so swift of foot, lost their quarry.

I shot my fifth lion in the Lydenburg district, when on a trek towards the Elephant River. We were pursuing a brute that had robbed us of several oxen. I at that time had a good and faithful dog, which was my constant companion, and which used to track the lions through the bushes. When he found the lion, he stood still, loudly giving tongue till the lion roared angrily back at him. When the dog saw me coming, he stood aside a little. Now the lion got ready for me; but, at the moment of springing, the dog seized him from behind, and a bullet at close quarters dispatched him quickly. This made the fifth lion that I killed by myself. In company with others, I have of course shot a great many more.

During a march against Moselikatse, who, a short time previously, had surprised and cut down our

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people, I was ordered to set out with a strong patrol from Wonderfontein, where we left our wagons, to reconnoiter the enemy's position. At Elephant's Pass, in the neighborhood of Rustenburg, we came across a big herd of elephants. The pass owes its name to this encounter. My father went after them, but Commandant Potgieter stopped him from shooting, as the enemy might be nearer than we knew. Those were the first elephants I saw.

My first rhinoceros I encountered during that same expedition. As I was slightly in advance of the others, my uncle Theunis Kruger gave me permission to fire, and I was so fortunate as to bring him down with the first shot. I had an ugly experience on the next occasion that we—my brother-in-law and faithful hunting companion, N. Theunissen, and I—hunted rhinoceros. I must mention that we had made an agreement by which that one who behaved recklessly or, through cowardice, allowed game which was only wounded to escape should receive a sound thrashing. There was something wrong with my rifle on the morning we started, and I was obliged to take an old two-barreled gun, one barrel of which was injured; consequently its driving power was considerably lessened. I knew that a shot is thrown away on a rhinoceros unless you manage to send it through the thin part of its skin. We came across three of them, a bull and two cows.

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They were *witharnosters*,¹ the most dangerous brutes. I told Theunissen to follow the two cows and not lose sight of them. It was my intention to kill the bull, and then join in pursuit of the cows. My comrade fired from time to time to let me know where he was, for he was soon out of sight in the thick undergrowth of the wood. When I had passed the rhinoceros, I jumped from my horse to shoot him. I placed myself so that he had to pass me within ten paces; this would give me a good opportunity to hit him in a vulnerable place. One bullet killed him outright. I mounted and rode as fast as I could go in the direction whence I heard Theunissen's gun, loading my rifle as I galloped. He had just sent a second bullet into one of the cows as I came up. The brute stood quite still. I saw that the animal was trying to get away through the underwood, which was less dense here than anywhere else, and I went after her. As I rode past my comrade, he called out:

“Don't dismount in front of the beast; she's awfully wild and can run like anything.”

I did not pay much attention to the warning, knowing Theunissen to be over-cautious, but jumped off my horse and ran obliquely past the rhinoceros. She had scarcely caught sight of me

¹ *Rhenoster* is the Afrikander for rhinoceros. *Witharnoster* is a white rhinoceros.—*Translator's Note.*

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before she was in hot pursuit. I allowed her to come within a distance of three or four yards. When I fired, the percussion-cap refused, and there was no time for a second shot. The animal was close upon me, and there was nothing to be done but to turn round and run for dear life. In attempting to do so, my foot struck against the thorn roots, and I came down flat on my face. The beast was upon me; the dangerous horn just missed my back; she pinned me to the ground with her nose, intending to trample me to death. But, at that moment, I turned under her and got the contents of the second barrel full under the shoulder-blade, right into her heart. I owed my life to not letting go my hold on the gun during this dangerous adventure. The rhinoceros sprang away from me, but fell down dead a few yards away.

My brother-in-law hurried up as fast as he could, for he thought I had been mortally wounded by my own gun in this deadly combat. When he saw, however, that I was standing up safe and sound, he took his sjambok, and "according to contract" commenced to belabor me soundly, because I had, he said, acted recklessly, in disregarding his warning. Soft words and attempts to justify my conduct were thrown away on him; it availed me nothing to point out to him that the beast had already hurt and bruised me to such an extent that I might well be let

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off my hiding. I was eventually obliged to entrench myself behind the thorn-bushes. But this was the first and last time that Theunissen had occasion to thrash me.

I brought down my first buffalo very near the above spot. A flying herd of buffaloes came up from the valley by the bank of the stream. We hunted them, and I led. A buffalo-cow left the herd and made a rush for me as I jumped from my horse to shoot. I was ready, however, and, when she had come very near, shot her through the shoulder. The impetus of her onset knocked me down, and she rushed on over my body, fortunately without stepping on me. She took refuge on the opposite bank of the river, where we killed her.

My next adventure with buffaloes took place near Bierkraalspruit Farm. The underwood was from four to five feet high, and contained a number of buffaloes. Six of us came to hunt them. I forced my way alone through the bushes to see if it was possible to get a shot there, and passed a herd of buffaloes without being aware of them; but before long I came right upon a second herd of the beasts. A big buffalo at once turned his attention to me, but fortunately his horns were so wide apart that, in butting, the trees and bushes got mixed up between them, which not only broke the force of his attack, but hid me very effectually, if only for a few mo-

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ments, from his sight. Trying to get out of the wood, I found myself suddenly amongst the herd which I had passed a little while ago, without noticing them at the time. Even now I only realized the position when I ran right up against a buffalo that was just getting up from the ground. Angered at being disturbed, the beast tore my clothes from my back with his hoof. My comrades, as they stood outside the wood, took the buffalo's hoof for his horns, so high did he raise it in attacking me. Fortunately I escaped with a fright.

My brother-in-law N. Theunissen and I were hunting near Vleeschkraal, in the Waterburg district, when I had a most unpleasant encounter with a buffalo. I had hit a buffalo-cow, and she had escaped into the dense thorn-bushes. As it was impossible to follow on horseback, I gave my horse to my brother Nicholas, and followed the buffalo on foot. The great thing was not to lose sight of her in the thick undergrowth. Believing myself to be the pursuer, I was unpleasantly startled to find her suddenly facing and attacking me. I got ready to shoot, but my flint-lock missed fire, so I had to run for it. The rains had been heavy, and just behind me was a big swamp into which I fell as I jumped out of the enraged animal's way. The buffalo fell in after me, and stood over me in a threatening attitude before I had time to get up.

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My rifle was in the water and useless; but, fortunately for me, as the buffalo butted at me, she rammed one of her horns fast into the ground of the swamp, where it stuck. I got hold of the other and tried with all my strength to force the animal's head under the water and so suffocate her. It was a difficult thing to do, for the horn was very slippery on account of the slimy water, and I needed both hands and every atom of strength I had to keep her head under. When I felt it going, I disengaged one of my hands to get at the hunting-knife, which I carried on my hip, in order to rid myself of my antagonist. But, if I could not hold the brute with two hands, I certainly could not hold her with one, and she freed herself with a final effort. She was in a sad plight, however, nearly suffocated and her eyes so full of slime that she could not see. I jumped out of the swamp and hid behind the nearest bush, and the buffalo ran off in the opposite direction. My appearance was no less disreputable than the buffalo's, for I was covered from head to foot with mud and slime. Theunissen, hearing the row we made, knew that something was amiss, but he could not come to my assistance. It was impossible to get through the undergrowth of thorns on horseback.

When I had cleaned myself down a little, I got on the track of the rest of the herd, and succeeded in shooting two.

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I was never so near losing my life as once during a race with an elephant. One day, Adrian van Rensburg and I were on the veldt looking for elephants. Van Rensburg was behind me, when the first herd came in sight. I galloped on to get a good shot at them. I could not wait for van Rensburg, for the horse I was riding that day was a particularly spirited animal, and had the habit of running round me in a circle after I dismounted. This necessitated my quieting and holding him, and so some time was lost before I was ready to shoot. As I jumped down, one of the elephants caught sight of me, and came through the bushes as fast as she could go. At the moment of dismounting, I knew nothing of my danger, and had not the least idea that an elephant was after me. Van Rensburg, however, saw everything, and called out as loudly as he could to warn me. I turned and saw that the elephant was flattening the bushes behind me with her heavy weight as she broke through the underwood. I tried to mount, but the elephant was already upon me, and the weight of the underwood, trodden down and held together by the bulk of the elephant, pinned me to the ground. I found it impossible to mount. I let go of my horse, freed myself with a tremendous effort, and sprang right before and past the elephant. She followed, trumpeting and screaming, hitting out at me fiercely with her trunk. Now came a race for life

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or death. However, I gradually increased the distance between us; but that was a race I am never likely to forget.

The Kaffirs who were with us were about a hundred yards away. When they saw what was happening, they too commenced to run; so there we were: the Kaffirs first, I after them, and after me the elephant in furious pursuit. While running, the idea came to my mind that I would catch the Kaffir who was the poorest runner, and, in case the elephant bore down on him, step suddenly aside and kill her at close quarters. I had kept hold of my rifle, a big four-pounder. But the elephant was so tired out by this time, that she herself put a stop to the hunt by standing still. Just then van Rensburg came up, but his horse stepped into a hole covered with grass, and both horse and rider came down, for van Rensburg's foot had caught in the stirrup. Meanwhile, the elephant had disappeared. After van Rensburg had found his legs again, I said to him:

“ Hunt in that direction,” pointing with my finger, “ and try to catch my horse!”

The elephant, in making her escape, had turned first to the north and then to the west, the direction in which the herd had moved on. I said to van Rensburg:

“ When you have found my horse, bring it after

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me. Meanwhile, I will follow the herd of elephants, and not lose sight of them till you join me.”

I soon came up with the female elephant that had pursued me. The calf ran a little way behind her. I passed it quickly to get near the mother; but it screamed when it saw me, and the mother, who turned round quickly at the cry, just caught sight of me as I jumped into the bushes. I ran as fast as I could through the underwood, and came suddenly upon van Rensburg, who had caught my horse.

“There are tse-tse flies here,” he said; “we must turn back.”

“Very well,” I answered, “you go on, but I must get a shot first at these elephants which have given me so much trouble.”

The mother and her calf had meanwhile disappeared, but, before I made my way back, I was so lucky as to shoot two of the herd. Unfortunately my horse, whose name was Tempus, had been stung by the poisonous flies, and shortly after our return, at the commencement of the rainy season, it sickened and died.

When quite a youth I encountered a tiger or panther. My Uncle Theunis, his son and I were hunting antelope, or elands, near Tjgerfontein Farm, in the neighborhood of Ventersdorp, and we soon found an antelope in the cover. My cousin rode in

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front and my uncle followed him; there was a distance of about forty yards between them. Suddenly, a panther appeared and made for us at a furious rate, although we had given him no provocation whatever. He overtook my uncle; but the latter's well-aimed shot brought the panther to the ground at the very moment when he was leaping on the horse which my uncle was riding.

A big lion-hunt, in which several of us took part, gave me the opportunity of witnessing a remarkable instance of canine fidelity. We had a whole pack of hounds with us. When they had found the herd of lions, they surrounded it, barking furiously. One of the hounds would go no further from us than about twenty paces. There he stood barking; but nothing could induce him to join the pack: he was too frightened to do that, and too faithful to leave us. One of the lions made for us and then the poor terrified hound was the only one that did not run away. He stuck to his post. He trembled and howled with fear, to say nothing of more visible signs of distress, and every second he looked round anxiously at his master to see if he were still there, hoping, I dare say, that he would fly, and that the dog might follow at his heels. But the master stayed and so the dog stayed. The lion was within ten paces of the dog when we shot him. And even now the timid dog was the only one of all the noisy pack that attacked him as he fell

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under our fire. He nearly died of fear, but remained at his post for love of his master.

In the year 1845, my two brothers Douw and Theunis, Douw's wife, my own wife and I were making a halt near Secucuni's town, not far from the place where the Spekboom River joins the Steenpoort River, in the north of the Transvaal. We outspanned, and I went, in the course of the day, on the veldt to shoot some game. I was mounted, and carried my old big four-pounder. After about an hour's ride, I came across a rhinoceros and shot at it. But I only succeeded in wounding the animal, and it fled into the wood. I dismounted quickly, ready to shoot again, but moved only a few steps away from my horse, lest the rhinoceros should turn to attack me, in which case it would be necessary to remount at once. I succeeded in getting a second shot; but, at that very moment, my rifle exploded just where I held it with my left hand, and my left thumb, the lock and the ramrod lay before me on the ground and the barrel of the gun behind me. I had no time to think, for the furious animal was almost upon me; so I jumped on my horse and galloped away as fast as I could, with the rhinoceros in fierce pursuit, until we came to the ford of a little spruit, when my pursuer came to the ground and so allowed me to ride quietly in the direction of our wagons. During the next day, our people, guided by the track of my

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horse, went to the spot, and there they found the rhinoceros still alive, and, following the trail of blood, discovered the remains of the rifle and my thumb.

My hand was in a horrible state. The great veins were torn asunder and the muscles lay exposed. The flesh was hanging in strips. I bled like a slaughtered calf. I had succeeded in tying a large pocket-handkerchief round the wound while riding, to save the horse from being splashed with blood. When I got to the wagons, my wife and sister-in-law were sitting by the fire, and I went up to them laughing so as not to frighten them. My sister-in-law pointed to my hand, which looked like a great piece of raw meat, the handkerchief being saturated with blood.

“Look what fat game brother Paul has been shooting!” she said.

I called out to my wife to go to the wagon and fetch some turpentine, as I had hurt my hand. Then I asked my sister-in-law to take off my bandolier, and she saw that my hand was torn and noticed how white I was, for I had hardly any blood left in my body. I kept on renewing the turpentine bandages, for turpentine is a good remedy to “burn the veins up,” as the Boers say, and thus to stop the bleeding. I sent my youngest brother—he was still really young at the time—to borrow as much turpentine as he could get from the nearest farm, which was about half an hour’s ride away. Herman Potgieter, who

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was afterwards so cruelly murdered by the Kaffirs, came over with his brother. The former got into the wagon and, when he saw the wound, cried out:

“That hand will never heal; it is an awful wound!”

He had to get down again as quickly as possible, for he was nigh fainting. But his brother said, possibly to comfort me:

“Nonsense; I have seen worse wounds than that: get plenty of turpentine.”

We inspanned and drove to the farm. Every one there advised me to send for a doctor and have the hand amputated; but I positively refused to allow myself to be still further mutilated of my own free will. The two joints of what was once my thumb had gone, but it appeared that it would still be necessary to remove a piece of bone. I took my knife, intending to perform the operation, but they took it away from me. I got hold of another a little later and cut across the ball of the thumb, removing as much as was necessary. The worst bleeding was over, but the operation was a very painful one. I had no means by me of deadening the pain, so I tried to persuade myself that the hand on which I was performing this surgical operation belonged to somebody else.

The wound healed very slowly. The women sprinkled finely-powdered sugar on it, and, from

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time to time, I had to remove the dead flesh with my pocket-knife; but gangrene set in after all. Different remedies were employed, but all seemed useless, for the black marks rose as far as the shoulder. Then they killed a goat, took out the stomach and cut it open. I put my hand into it while it was still warm. This Boer remedy succeeded, for when it came to the turn of the second goat, my hand was already easier and the danger much less. The wound took over six months to heal, and, before it was quite cured, I was out hunting again.

I account for the healing power of this remedy by the fact that the goats usually graze near the Spekboom River, where all sorts of herbs grow in abundance.

CHAPTER II
COMMENCEMENT OF PUBLIC
ACTIVITY

